

Charting The Course

Department of Social and Health Services



DSHS Strategic Direction for 2009-2013

Each day, we help individuals and families become more self-sufficient, meet basic needs for food, shelter, and medical care, and resolve serious family issues such as child abuse, domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental illness.

Every two years, DSHS evaluates its priorities and reassesses how to best meet its core mission. The strategic planning process helps us align resources with changing social and economic conditions and needs.

The strategic plan communicates the major DSHS goals and the primary objectives and strategies to better serve the people of Washington state.

MISSION

Improving the quality of life for individuals and families by helping people achieve safe, healthy, self-sufficient and secure lives

VISION

Healthy, safe, and productive Washington residents

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These principles guide and direct how we operate and conduct our business

- Customer focus
- Service coordination
- Responsiveness to diversity
- Strategic thinking
- Collaborative leadership
- Community partnerships
- Accountable performance
- Organizational development
- Employee participation

WITH DSHS HELP...

- People are able to afford nutritious food
- Adults and children are getting cash assistance to help them meet their basic needs
- Parents are learning how to find jobs to support their families and get off welfare
- Families are able to meet a short-term emergency need for food, shelter, utilities, medical care, or job-related transportation
- Parents are working to resolve serious family issues like domestic violence and substance abuse
- Families receive financial and medical support services from child support
- Individuals with severe disabilities achieve employment
- Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, speech disabled, or deaf and blind have access to specialized telecommunication equipment

PRIORITIES OF GOVERNMENT

DSHS GOALS

Health Care

A. Improve health care quality and access

Vulnerable Children and Adults

B. Improve treatment for mental illness and chemical dependency

C. Improve children's safety and well-being

D. Improve long-term care

Safety

E. Increase employment and self-sufficiency

F. Use effective treatment to enhance outcomes

G. Foster public safety through rehabilitation services

Government Efficiency

H. Reinforce strong management to increase public trust

I. Strengthen data-driven decision making

J. Value and develop employees

K. Improve internal and external partnerships

DID YOU KNOW?

- More than 80 percent of the DSHS budget is spent on vendor and client payments
- Medical expenses account for 44 percent of the DSHS client budget
- Family and other unpaid caregivers provide nearly 80 percent of all long-term care
- DSHS receives and blocks about 22 million spam emails each month, more than 80 percent of all email coming into DSHS

Managing Performance

The Washington State Management Framework holds state agencies accountable to be more effective and efficient in achieving results and ensuring public tax dollars are spent wisely.

Strategic planning is an active partnership in which DSHS leaders work with staff and stakeholders to evaluate progress, identify challenges, and develop and implement strategies for moving forward.

Washington State Management Framework



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The number of families on public assistance is at its lowest point in over 30 years
- Children are safer because we respond more quickly to child abuse and neglect reports
- More children have access to medical care through state-financed health programs
- A mental health transformation grant moves the state toward recovery-oriented, consumer and family-driven mental health services
- Investing in chemical dependency treatment cuts waiting times and saves taxpayers money in medical costs
- More elderly and disabled people get their long-term care needs met in less-costly home and community settings
- We have eliminated the waiting list for individuals needing vocational rehabilitation services for successful employment
- Employees are safer from assaults in state psychiatric hospitals and juvenile rehabilitation institutions
- Programs are applying for independent assessments through the Washington State Quality Award process

CHALLENGES

- High staff-to-client ratios that increase liability and impact timely investigations, quality case management and services
- Employee recruitment and retention
- Internal audit findings, complaints, and continued litigation exposure that show risk to client and staff safety, threaten programs and finances, and damage public perception
- Changing federal and state rules, directives, and court requirements that impact service delivery, budget, and operations
- Over-representation of minority children and youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems
- Increasing economic uncertainty and growing demand for long-term care as baby boomers age

ACCOUNTABILITY

For several years, DSHS and the Governor's office have been using GMAP (Government Management Accountability and Performance) forums to review performance, analyze data, make decisions, and take action.

DSHS participates in executive level GMAP forums about Vulnerable Children and Adults, Health Care, Workfirst, and Public Safety. Recent sessions looked at performance in these areas:

- Responding quickly to reports of child abuse and neglect
- Tracking long-term care services in home and community settings
- Increasing the number of children with medical coverage
- Reducing unnecessary use of emergency departments
- Increasing access for children to inpatient mental health care
- Reducing juvenile and adult sex offender recidivism
- Tracking people needing and receiving basic food assistance
- Increasing employee and client safety in psychiatric hospitals

